

## ENGLISH SUMMARY

### 1. Location and territorial development of Solu-Khumbu

Solu-Khumbu, the home of the Sherpas at the foot of Mount Everest (Fig. 1 and 2), comprises the three sub-districts Khumbu (Fig. 3), Pharak (Fig. 4), and Solu with the upper valleys of Solu Khola (Fig. 5), Maulung Khola, Likhu Khola (Fig. 7), and Khimti Khola (Fig. 8). The territorial development of Solu-Khumbu is illustrated by four maps (Fig. 6, 9, 10 and 11). It is *not* identical with the district panchayat (*jillā pancāyat*) Solukhumbu (Fig. 10) established in 1962 when, with the introduction of the new panchayat system, the administrative boundaries in Nepal were redrawn.

### 2. Ethnic and caste groups and their distribution

Today Solu-Khumbu is populated by various ethnic and caste groups (Table 1, Appendix 1, Plate 1). It was first settled by the ancestors of the present-day Sherpas who in the 16th century migrated from Tibet across the high mountain pass called Nangpa La (5716 m) into Khumbu and gradually moved southwards into Pharak and the upper valleys of the Solu, Maulung, Likhu and Khimti Khola. According to the *lāl mohar* of 1853 (Appendix 2) the Sherpas obtained settlement and land-ownership rights in these areas from the Rais and Sunwars, who lived farther down the rivers, but who must have considered all the land up to the snow-covered mountain ranges of the Khumbu Himal as parts of their tribal territories.

When Solu-Khumbu was incorporated into the Kingdom of Nepal in 1772/73 the land-ownership rights of the Sherpas were confirmed, but at the same time they were urged to accept newcomers. Thus especially the slopes below 2000 m elevation in the upper Likhu, Khimti and Maulung Khola valleys, considered by the Sherpas as too hot and humid, were handed over to Chetri farmers, who were followed by some Bahuns (Brahmins) as well as Kamis (blacksmiths) and Damais (tailors). Tamangs and Margars settled in various places of Solu to dig for iron and copper ore. Newars came as shopkeepers and Gurungs originally as herdsmen. Most of the Ghartis, Bhujels and Yembas now living in Solu-Khumbu are descendants of slaves who became free in 1924 when slavery was abolished in Nepal.

### 3. Settlement and land tenure

In this study the terms *sib*, *sub-sib* and *clan* are used according to the definitions of G. P. MURDOCK (1949). The Sherpa population (later immigrants from Tibet excluded) consists of four patrilineal sibs: Lamaserwa, Chiawa, Thimmi and Minyagpa. Except the Chiawas they break up into a number of sub-sibs with names of their own, but whose members are not allowed to intermarry. Originally the sibs,

later on the sub-sibs and other segments of the same sib, had their own territories, i. e. they formed independent clans. A new clan was established whenever a Sherpa left the territory of his kin group and obtained a new territory for himself and his descendants. The distribution of the former clan territories of the Solu-Sherpa is shown on Plate 2.

All the land inside the clan territory was considered the property of the clan as a whole. The individual member only obtained a right of usufruct to the plot he cultivated, but he could not transfer these rights to outsiders. This traditional form of communal land tenure, which was prevalent also among the other tribal groups of East Nepal before, and for some time after, the establishment of the Kingdom, has come to be known as *kipat*-right. The land given to newcomers remained part of the clan territory. These settlers were called *dhākre* and had to pay the taxes on their land through the Sherpa headman (*mijhār*).

From the end of the 19th century onwards the central government in Kathmandu tried to curtail the *kipat*-rights of the Sherpas in favour of the *raikar*-system, a more individual form of tenure under which the State is considered the owner of the land but the rights of an individual to utilization and transfer of the land are recognized by the State so long as taxes are paid. These attempts were eagerly supported by the Chetris of Solu, who, in the meantime, had greatly increased in number (polygamy!) so that their land resources were nearly exhausted. In 1886, as a first step, the land cultivated by *dhākre* was converted to *raikar*. In 1924 in West Solu and in 1942 in the remaining parts of Solu-Khumbu all the land permanently cultivated by clan members (*kipatiya*) was also turned to *raikar*. Finally, in 1949, the *kipat*-system was completely abolished. The common land was subdivided among the *kipatiya* and converted to *raikar*, as well. Since then, especially in the contact zones, a lot of land has passed into the hands of Chetris. Many Sherpa families have realized too late that there is no abundance of land anymore and have lost all of it.

#### 4. Sample study of the development of land ownership and settlement in Bhandar Panchayat, West Solu

A large-scale contour map (1:5,000; reduced to 1:10,000 for publication) was especially prepared for this project by the Research Scheme Nepal Himalaya. It enabled the author to carry out a detailed survey of land utilisation (Plate 4) and land ownership (Plate 3) in Bhandar Panchayat extending over a vertical distance of 1,400 m from the bottom of Likhu Khola Valley (1,400 m above sea level) up to the ridge of (Changma-)Deorali (2,800 m). Here Sherpa settlements reach down as far as the upper limit of rice cultivation. Their counterparts on the lower slopes are the Chetris. Members of various other groups are mainly concentrated in the contact zone of Sherpas and Chetris.

On the basis of the land-ownership map (Plate 3) and the results of additional genealogical research (Fig. 20 and 24) it was possible to give a minute description in words and maps (Fig. 21, 25 and 26) of the development of settlement and land

#### ENGLISH SUMMARY

ownership from the times when the first Sherpa settler purchased this area from the adjoining Sunwars (about 1640 A. D.) down to the present generation.

#### 5. Vertical differentiations in cultivation

After some preliminary information on the impact of climate and land forms on cultivation in Solu-Khumbu the land use map of Bhandar Panchayat (Plate 4) is discussed. The map shows the situation in the month of August when all the major summer crops are still in the field. With the sole exception of the potato they all reach their upper limits of cultivation within the mapped area. Additional information about crop rotations in various places of the Bhandar Panchayat are given. There is not only a vertical but also a horizontal zonation as the intensity of cultivation decreases with the distance from the settlement. Up to five different types can be discerned: wet-field cultivation; dry fields with (a) main rotations, (b) more intensive sub-rotations (near the house) and (c) extensive sub-rotations; outfield rotations. As the vegetation periods of all the crops get longer with increasing altitude, the rotations must be varied when the harvest of the preceding crop comes too close to the sowing of the next crop. Thus a great variety of rotation systems is to be found as one ascends from the lower slopes of the valley (below 1,500 m), where the winters are too dry for rain-fed cultivation, to the upper zone of pure summer cultivation (above 2,750 m), where the winters are too cold. In Plate 3 (diagram) all these different field systems can be viewed in one glance. It furthermore shows the upper limits of the main crops as well as the five main altitude levels of cultivation. The (potential) horizontal extension of these altitude levels of cultivation for the whole of Solu-Khumbu is represented in Plate 6. Finally some important upper limits of cultivation are discussed.